

Thomas Jefferson to Congress, December 7, 1807, Notes, from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

CONFIDENTIAL MESSAGE¹

¹ Sent with the following message to the Vice-President and Speaker of the House of Representatives.

“Dec. 7, 1807.

“ Sir,—The papers now communicated to your house for perusal being to be read in the other house also, and, as originals, to be returned to me, Mr. Coles, my Secretary, will attend to receive them, after they shall have been read to the satisfaction of your house; and, having handed them to the other house for the same purpose he will return them to me. I ask the favor of your aid in having this course pursued & in preventing their going from the clerk's table, or copies, or extracts being made from them by any one. I salute you with great esteem & respect.”

“Dec. 8.—The Speaker apprehending it might be necessary for him to read this letter to the house, & that the last paragraph might be offensive, I took back this, & gave him a copy to the words ‘return them to me,’ and I took back also that to the V. President (not yet delivered) and sent a copy to the word ‘pursued.’”

[Dec. 7. 1807.]

To the Senate & House of Representatives of the United States:

Library of Congress

Having recently received from our late Minister Plenipotentiary at the court of London a duplicate of dispatches, the original of which has been sent by the *Revenge* schooner not yet arrived, I hasten to lay them before both houses of Congress. They contain the whole of what has passed between the two governments on the subject of the outrage committed by the British ship *Leopard* on the frigate *Chesapeake*. Congress will learn from these papers the present state of the discussion on that transaction, and that it is to be transferred to this place by the mission of a special minister.

While this information will have it's proper effect on their deliberations & proceedings respecting the relations between the two countries, they will be sensible that, the negotiation being still depending, it is proper for me to request that the communications may be considered as confidential.